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ABSTRACT

This guide offers insight, advice, examples, and resources aimed at community education practitioners in the United Kingdom who want to establish sustainable community education and neighborhood renewal programs promoting active citizenship and social change. The following topics are discussed: (1) neighborhoods in crisis; (2) proposed government policy changes for combating social exclusion, empowering local communities, and improving poor neighborhoods; (3) the rationale for change; (4) neighborhood renewal; (5) community and education; (6) outreach; (7) curriculum development; (8) getting started; (9) listening campaigns; (10) strength in numbers and the importance of partnership; (11) assessing program impacts; (12) building in sustainability; (13) spreading the word; and (14) letting go and moving on. The final section lists good practices, issues/challenges, and troubleshooting. The following are among the good practices presented: (1) relate to the wider social, cultural, and economic context in which participants are situated; (2) empower local people to have more influence over how adult learning and other social services are delivered; (3) value people's experience and expertise and work toward sustainable social change; (4) encourage constructive partnerships between local people and all interested agencies; and (5) concentrate on removing barriers to participation. A glossary and lists of 13 references and 12 useful contacts and networks are included. (MN)

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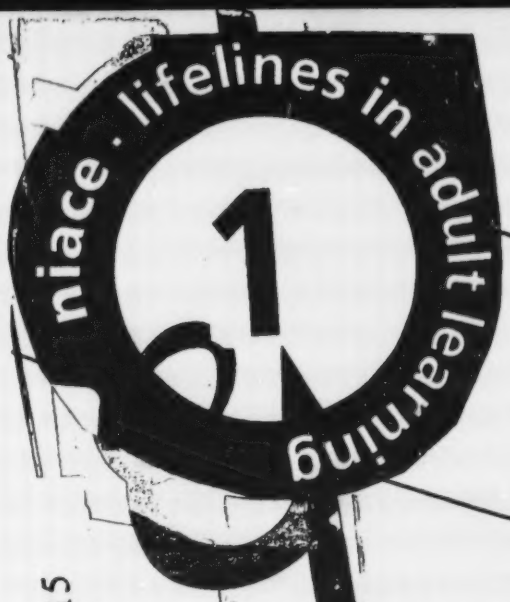

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Community education and neighbourhood renewal

Jane Thompson

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NIACE has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training, particularly for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties and disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

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Note to the reader:
Inspirations: refer to case studies and examples of good practice.
Glossary: the meanings of the words underlined in the text can be found in the glossary on pages 39 and 40.

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1 Neighbourhoods in crisis

> The wide gap between poor neighbourhoods and the rest results from a complex combination of factors. Some of the factors are social and economic changes that have affected many countries. When these combine they create a complex and fast moving vicious cycle. But, over several decades, the policies and actions of central and local government have not been good enough at tackling these issues; and sometimes they have been part of the problem.
>
> (*National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan 2001*)

Poverty and social exclusion in Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods are the result of deep-seated problems. Social exclusion goes beyond material poverty to include physical and social isolation, shabby and derelict environments, the experience of racism and other forms of discrimination, tensions and conflict between neighbours, risks of long-term unemployment, exposure to risks of criminality and crime and under-achievement in all kinds of educational provision.

The causes are complex and inter-related. They involve the cumulative consequences of social inequalities and divisions, economic restructuring and the decline of Britain's manufacturing base. They are the result of previous political neglect and the failure of policy interventions in the past to tackle inequalities and social divisions decisively. Interventions have often been too top-down and too short-term, confirming people's lack of trust in government and public services and their feelings of powerlessness and cynicism.

In addition, 70 per cent of Britain's black and minority ethnic citizens live in the poorest neighbourhoods, in circumstances where they experience some of the worst consequences of actual and institutional racism.

2 All change

The New Labour Government has set out ambitious and potentially radical goals for combating social exclusion, turning joined-up thinking into joined-up action at local level, empowering local communities, encouraging popular democratic participation and improving the quality of people's lives in some of our poorest and least powerful neighbourhoods. The issues involved offer community education one of the best opportunities it may have to put some of its ideas and values into practice. But are we up to the challenge? Do we know what to do? Are we ready to get serious about active citizenship and social change?

The analysis of the issues and the solutions proposed in government reports, especially *Bringing Britain back together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*, represent real opportunities for local people to have their priorities and concerns taken seriously. However, radical action and innovation are needed to make the most of these opportunities. Local community education providers and workers could assist enormously in this challenge. But they could also be found wanting. It has been a long time – almost 30 years – since community education workers have been asked to think, speak and act as though learning is connected to the wider purpose of social change. Or how they might support excluded groups, with few resources, in poor communities, get more involved in social action and democratic participation.

The ability of local service providers, including educational organisations and practitioners, to welcome change and make the most of the opportunities implicit in new policies for neighbourhood renewal is uneven. If community education is to engage with local people in a struggle that could make a serious difference to the quality of their lives, it has to start from a willingness to learn on both sides and do something about it together.

3 Why change?

'Because you can't regenerate a place without giving a sense of purpose to the people who live there.'
(community development worker)

'Because when I came to this country I thought there would be more choice but I soon realised that I had hardly any choice because of my language problems. Wherever I am I come across other immigrants – Africans, West Indians, Kosovans, Turkish . . . many of them don't have my language problems but they have no choice either. We are treated as second class citizens, not only through people's attitudes but in relation to the sorts of areas we live in and regarding the jobs we are offered.'
(British muslim)

'Because my community sees itself as under siege – from poverty, drugs, crime, officials who interfere rather than help you – although a kind of solidarity and pride has been developed in response. Now I have got involved in community development – particularly with women, who are the most active in our community. Our aim is to work together to empower individuals and the community as a whole to have a voice in the direction of the future.'
(local activist)

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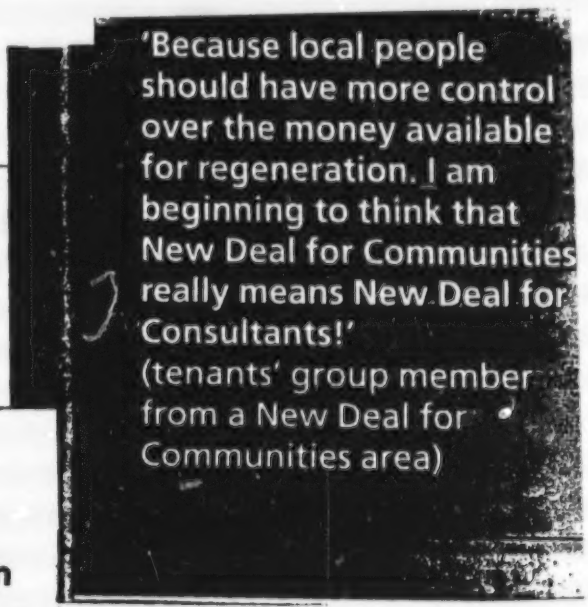
'Because we know that community groups have often been viewed by statutory bodies as irritants. But there is now a climate in which government is encouraging community groups to get involved in partnerships to promote neighbourhood renewal. We welcome the challenge. But partnership means equality not usury. The community sector should not allow itself to be turned on and off like a tap.'
(community centre volunteer)


'Because local people should have more control over the money available for regeneration. I am beginning to think that New Deal for Communities really means New Deal for Consultants!'
(tenants' group member from a New Deal for Communities area)

'Because we are too easily satisfied with notions of representation that are little more than tokenism. They have become the substitute for less 'managed' and therefore more democratic forms of dialogue.'
(local authority manager)

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INSPIRATIONS

South Wales

One of the most dramatic examples of a community taking control of their lives in the past decade must be the achievement of the miners of Tower Colliery in South Wales. When they marched back to their pit on 2 January 1996 they finally secured for themselves ownership of a colliery for which they had fought for 12 months. British Coal had closed the pit the previous year saying there were geological faults and no market for the coal. The miners knew that the pit had reserves of coal to provide employment for at least another 10 – possibly 25 – years. In an area of high unemployment Tower Colliery is now one of the largest employers and is still going strong. The ownership of the pit is entirely in the hands of the workers. All profits are reinvested. When they leave, the miners sell back their shares in the pit to the company to sell on to future generations. All voting is on a one-person-one-vote basis and the miners are directly represented at board level.

Laughton Common

Laughton Common is a housing development situated half-way between the former collieries of Thurcroft and Dinnington in South Yorkshire. Since the pits were shut down following the miners' strike in the mid-1980s the housing stock in Laughton has deteriorated considerably. The local authority wants to pull the houses down and rebuild them. Compulsory purchase orders are to be issued to those who own their own homes. The irony is that some of the residents who bought their houses with their redundancy money will have to become rent payers again when the new houses will be handed over to a housing association to manage. Laughton Common is a desolate place on a drizzly day. The grass grows long and the streets are empty.

GROW (Giving Real Opportunities to Women) is a voluntary organisation that has been working with young women from Laughton Common for over three years, building up trust and developing learning possibilities. In the basic skills class the women are researching and recording what is happening to their community. They have collected archive material from the local library, newspaper cuttings and photographs. They add to this their own personal and family histories. The young women are angry and don't feel consulted about the housing situation and about what is going to happen to them. They value the opportunity to come together and make a more concerted attempt to get their voices heard by the planners and decision makers. The weekly meetings are building social solidarity and fostering inclusion. They are helping people who are sceptical towards authority and feel victims of circumstances to find ways of exerting a little more control in their lives.

Yorkshire and Humberside

The long-standing decline and restructuring of the steel industry in Yorkshire and Humberside has devastated the lives of people living in steel communities. Many are affected by long-term unemployment This has led to weak local economies, polarised communities and high levels of social exclusion and deprivation. But many of the communities in the steel areas are trying to tackle these problems. Locally-based, community-led initiatives are now recognised to be essential to social and economic regeneration, the development of new businesses and new job opportunities in these communities. These in turn are linked to the development of new education and training initiatives involving local universities, colleges, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

Neighbourhood renewal

- provides a policy context in which people's involvement in learning and action is vital to help turn around the fortunes of deprived communities
- recognises the importance of learning for social change
- provides a powerful opportunity for real partnerships between different sectors in ways that connect top-down and bottom-up initiatives

Neighbourhood Renewal: the basics

The term 'neighbourhood renewal' was first used by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit in its report *Bringing Britain back together: A national strategy for neighbourhood renewal* (1998) to address problems it had identified in Britain's most deprived areas.

In January 2001 the Government launched a 20-year **Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan** concerned to close the gap between the richest and poorest areas of the country. The plan includes the promise of new policies, the development of new structures and a range of targets to be achieved.

The plan is being implemented by a new **Neighbourhood Renewal Unit** (NRU) linked to the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) with **Neighbourhood Renewal Teams** attached to regional government offices. The work is supported by a £800m renewal fund.

A specially-recruited **Community Task Force**, drawn from a cross-section of people who have worked in deprived neighbourhoods, advises the NRU and the Neighbourhood Renewal Teams on how best to engage local people and increase community participation in neighbourhood renewal.

A dedicated **Skills and Knowledge** team within the NRU is responsible for developing a learning and development strategy for everyone involved in neighbourhood renewal, including civil servants, professionals, practitioners and community residents.

At local level **Local Strategic Partnerships** (LSPs) are required to agree local priorities, co-ordinate local planning, secure the commitment and agreement of

key stakeholders and collaborate on a concerted plan of action. Targetted funding via the **Community Empowerment Fund** and **Community Chests** – administered through regional government offices – are available to residents and community groups to participate in the LSPs and run their own projects.

LSPs are expected to involve local people actively in their work in sufficient numbers to have an effect.

Challenges and dilemmas

- Reviving the local economy, empowering the local community, improving public services and encouraging local leadership – New Labour has stamped these four hallmarks on its policy to revitalise poor neighbourhoods. But years of top-down solutions have made local communities suspicious.
- In the past 'regeneration' was what was done to communities by remote and unaccountable officials, usually dominated by local authorities. Local authorities are still dominant partners in the LSPs but they are to be closely scrutinised for their openness and fairness by government offices in the regions. Local residents are supposed to have their own budgets to help them influence the LSPs and to carry out their own projects.
- A lot of the work currently being given to outside consultants and agencies could be done (with suitable training) by local people. But as soon as it comes down to giving the money to local groups, there is a flurry of opposition from those officials and professionals who control the policies and currently get the cash – about the virtues of volunteering on the one hand, and the spectre of incompetence, benefit fraud and the dependency culture on the other.
- While the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy points out that the number of people without a bank or savings account is the main indicator of social exclusion, it does not acknowledge that this makes women the majority of Britain's urban poor, or discuss the ways in which women experience poverty differently to men. This is affecting the way projects are being implemented on the ground: for example, the lack of affordable childcare, poor play facilities for children, infrequent and inefficient transport and fears about personal safety. Racism, isolation and difficulties in accessing health and social care are additional problems for black and minority ethnic women. The New Deal for Communities programme in Bradford – which has a potential budget of £100m over ten years – has only two women among its 12 community directors, and only five of the 25 board members are women.
- Despite the call from national and local politicians for more direct involvement and active participation from local people in deprived neighbourhoods, they stress this should be done 'responsibly', through the 'proper channels' and 'in

partnership' with local service providers and the local state. Quite often community action comes from impatience with (or opposition to) official policies, however, in ways that challenge the actions of local authorities. Community education workers, working alongside local people, could find themselves caught in the middle, with some difficult ethical decisions to make.

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5 Community and education

The term **community** is generally defined in one of three ways:

- the geographical area where people live, in which feel they have important things in common and some sense of awareness of themselves as a group. The area often has a distinctive name and commonly agreed territorial boundaries.
- a group which shares a common culture based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender or identity.
- a group which has interests and concerns that are important to them in common with others, for example political beliefs, sports or pastimes, a job or profession.

Of course, the idea of community has acquired a number of connotations that go beyond its literal meaning as people living in specific areas or groups with shared interests and characteristics. Community is a word that unlike group, area or neighbourhood has a tremendous feel-good factor associated with it. Community is about feeling secure, being on the same wavelength, not being a stranger, being able to count on each other, helping each other out – especially if you are poor or a member of a least powerful minority. Community, used in this way, stands for a kind of 'paradise lost' which we seek to renew or hope to return to.

Community is also a term that gets applied to others, by people with authority over them, on those occasions when a feel-good factor is required to paint a more positive and attractive image than the one widely associated with sink estates, racial discrimination or poverty. According to Stephen Brookfield, this abuse of the word 'community' has the power

> 'to inspire a reverential suspension of critical judgement in the minds of adult educators, social workers and those within the caring and health professions ...as if in invoking this term they imbue their practice with a humanistic concern and self-righteous compassion'.

It is hard to find a recent or educational policy document that does not fall into this trap. But while community adult education is often imbued with connotations of concern and desirability, this has not prevented it from being the poor relation when it comes to staffing, funding and recognition.

Currently the notion of community, especially as it gets used by New Labour, has taken on another set of connotations, linked to social deprivation and social exclusion. The solution is seen to lie in greater consultation, more local involvement, capacity-building, training opportunities and community empowerment schemes. The conservative interpretation of this agenda leads to attempts to 'reform and shape-up' dysfunctional individuals in excluded groups to make them 'more like us'.

The more radical interpretation seeks to support grassroots activism, active citizenship and wider power-sharing. In this sense community education becomes a resource for democratic renewal, rather than simply crowd control or a progression route to off-the-peg training courses supplied by the local college.

Community education

Community education is a way of working with people, in the places where they live, in response to the issues and aspirations that are important to them, through the activity of learning. This sometimes involves formal learning but is much more likely to involve a mix of non-formal and informal learning.

Formal learning refers to any explicitly organised learning activity which is substantially controlled by the educational institution in which, or through which, it is delivered.

Non-formal learning refers to any explicitly organised learning activity which is intended to serve an identifiable group with specific learning objectives and which is substantially controlled by the participants and/or local community.

Informal learning refers to the learning that goes on in everyday life – from experience, at home, in the community, at work, in support groups and interest groups and action groups – it reflects learning that is implicit, ongoing, pervasive and incidental.

Community education can:

- help to build on what people already know from their own experience with new knowledge and skills that could make a qualitative difference to their lives.
- provide some of the glue that connects 'issues' to 'ideas', and 'understanding' to 'practical action'. It can build bridges between people in divided communities and help to repair damaged solidarities.
- generate practical learning of skills in ways that boost employability and

confidence or promote participation and a culture of activism.

- overcome alienation and isolation, especially when it concentrates on group-working and collective activities.
- help to build up self-esteem and encourage a greater understanding of other people's viewpoints.

NICK HAYES

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6 Outreach

Outreach is a term that was widely used in the 1970s in relation to the radical community-based education work developed by some university extramural departments and some London institutes before the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was abolished by the Tory Government. The consequences of successive cuts in adult education budgets, funding changes and a more instrumental approach to education throughout the Thatcher years put increasing pressure on educational providers to compete with each other for 'customers' in the 'education market place'. These developments signalled the demise of outreach for a good 20 years.

More recently there has come a resurgence of interest in outreach, although official understanding and application of the term varies enormously, as McGivney shows (see *NIACE Lifelines in Adult Learning 2*).

So far as good practice in community education is concerned, outreach means a process whereby people who would not normally get involved in adult learning provision – for reasons of poverty, exclusion, lack of confidence, institutional and cultural barriers or general, understandable, alienation from education – become re-engaged in learning in non-institutional settings. Through a patient and dedicated process of making contact and talking with people in contexts and settings that are familiar to them, good outreach workers can work out what kinds of learning resources or opportunities they would welcome and begin to put them in place.

But it is all too easy for this view of outreach – in the perception of institutional managers with targets to meet – to involve token discussions and be seen primarily as a way of stimulating demand for their services and facilitating the supply of provision.

Outreach workers who have the interests of learners rather than institutions at heart will be less concerned with meeting a target or finding a market for educational provision and more concerned with how to make educational resources and opportunities responsive to the prevailing concerns and interests of those in the local community. Viewed like this, outreach is not concerned with educational consumerism, but with creating a dialogue through which education becomes a resource for ordinary people to use, in ways that make sense to them.

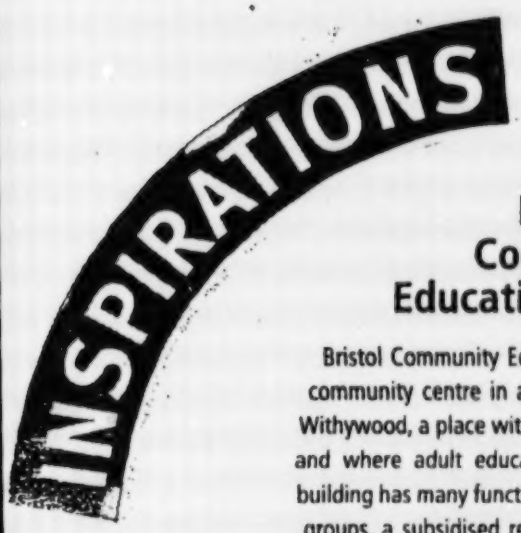
Curriculum matters

The curriculum associated with community education should not be limited to non-formal versions of off-the-peg courses, generated by providers, and delivered to non-traditional learners in community-based settings. Asking potential learners what they want and offering taster sessions usually ends up with the professionals teaching the kinds of things they are already familiar with, in ways that fit in with pre-determined courses, teaching materials and accreditation regulations. This is not to say that a more locally-based and less formal re-introduction to learning does not have its place. But it is unlikely that such an approach really does start from where people are or from the issues and concerns that affect their lives in poor – and often divided – communities.

Tackling the personal, social, economic, cultural and political issues identified by local people as being important in terms of neighbourhood renewal – in ways that put local people in the driving seat, in ways that are sustainable and which begin to make a difference to their lives – means that the curriculum should be relevant, purposeful and subject to continuing review and negotiation. It should also be fun. There are many ways to think about, try to understand, and get involved in social issues that are also sociable, practical or creative. People are much more likely to become engaged in learning if they are enjoying themselves and if they can see results.

Learning that is responsive and engaging in this way will almost certainly:

- build on what people already know from experience and from informal learning in their everyday lives.
- make the most of local expertise.
- encourage people to learn *from* each other and to learn *with* each other.
- build in the introduction of relevant new knowledge and skills as these become necessary and appropriate.
- be based on teaching methods that are participatory, interactive, practical, creative, and which involve problem-solving and critical thinking.
- require teachers who understand the issues at stake; have the personal skills to establish equal and respectful relationships with learners; are sensitive to equal opportunities, cultural difference and social inclusion; and who can teach in a knowledgeable and practical but informal way.



Bristol Community Education Workshop

Bristol Community Education Workshop is based in a community centre in a peripheral housing estate called Withywood, a place with a history of poor schooling locally and where adult education used to be unheard of. The building has many functions: a meeting place for community groups, a subsidised restaurant, a crèche and a base for adult education. People come because the centre is local and doesn't feel like a college. Free and good quality childcare makes it possible for women particularly to participate.

New Addington

The Fieldway project is based on a huge housing estate in New Addington, Surrey – the second biggest in Europe, with 11,000 homes. The Learning Ambassadors scheme is designed to go out onto the estate and bring local people back into education by showing them what is available. Volunteers go round the estate – into public places and people's homes – to talk about the benefits of education and to find out what kinds of courses they would like to see being run. The volunteers receive training to do the work and also get the chance of education for themselves.

Spitalfields

A group of Bangladeshi women are rediscovering their rural roots at Spitalfields City Farm in London's East End. Horticulture lessons are part of a project that is building links with the Bangladeshi community. Living in tiny flats in the inner city, the women have taken to cultivating coriander and other herbs in window boxes. Building on the women's enthusiasm for growing herbs as a starting point, other activities are now taking place. In one year half a dozen women gained a Pitman qualification in basic English, and IT training is starting in the near future. The classes are also important as a bridge between home life and the outside world and in helping to guard against isolation.

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INSPIRATIONS

Skills Unit, Ipswich

A group of unemployed men peer under the bonnet of an old banger they are getting to race in a local demolition derby. The car has been stripped down to the bare metal – minus all passenger seats and interior trim and with an anti-roll bar added for the driver's protection. The car battery sits next to the driver, bolted down to prevent spillages, and the hatchback has been welded shut to prevent it springing open in a collision. This is the Skills Unit, Ipswich, a workshop unit on an industrial estate on the outskirts of town. Unemployment and crime are high on the sink estates on the south side of the town. The project brings together a mix of young men and women from local youth clubs, New Dealers and young offenders working on a variety of different programmes. The work involved encourages participants to ask questions, keep a diary and to learn in practical ways that feed their interests and provide transferable job skills. Talk to the group of young men working on the souped up racer and you quickly realise two things. First, they are keen to learn and second, they have been seriously failed by the school system in the past. This project begins the work of re-building what has been lost.

Getting started

If you know the local area well and have good relationships with the people who live in it, you are already in a good position to get started. If not, you need to do some homework and make some contacts as a first priority.

- Spend time in the community – rather than your office or your car.
- Take time to talk to people informally.
- Offer your services to local groups in ways that are useful to them.
- Try to get a feel for what the issues are and make sure you understand them.
- Try to work out which individuals and groups are potential allies.

Residents in run-down communities are rightly critical of being kept in the dark or treated as the targets for projects and new initiatives, rather than being in the driving seat. It will be important to win people's trust, to consult widely, to be open and inclusive and to try to build consensus about what is to be done.

- Ask the people who live there for information about the area.
- Ask for their advice.
- Listen to what they say – even if it's not what you want to hear.

- Tell them what's going on. Ask for their help.
- Do some shuttle diplomacy between rival groups.
- If conflict between residents is an issue, seek training in anti-discriminatory practice and conflict resolution.

Residents in run-down communities are also cynical about the merry-go-round of short-term projects, top-down initiatives and so-called experts and transient consultants who come and go with little lasting effect. Make your preparations early for building-in sustainability and continuity.

- Work in partnership with local people, voluntary and other agencies who have long-term commitments to the area.
- Put energy into collective and co-operative ways of working and learning so that everything is not down to individuals.
- Build up and pass on the necessary skills to local people to run things on their own.
- Convince local structures and providers to provide funding. Look at ways of generating funding and job creation within the community.

Listening campaigns

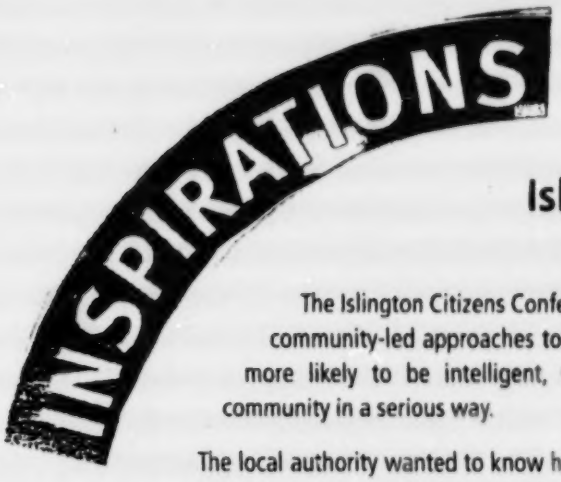
Before you start devising any new projects or initiatives, organise a listening campaign. The main purpose of listening campaigns is to find out what issues people have strong feelings about, in the belief that people are more likely to get involved in action and activities about things that concern them.

- Listening campaigns involve a participatory approach – between 12 and 20 people provide a good working number. A mix of local residents who have contact with different members of the community is best. Depending on the scale of the exercise allow 6-12 weeks for the campaign to be carried out, with weekly meetings for those involved. Listening campaigns can also be used to solve problems or identify issues in organisations as well as in specific neighbourhoods.
- Those taking part should call a public meeting to let people know about the campaign, its purpose and when they will report back with their findings.
- No one asks anyone any questions; they simply go about their normal routine with alert ears and eyes. They should try not to get involved in discussions but concentrate on listening to what others are saying with feeling and emotion. Some people find it helpful to keep a diary, jotting down each day the issues they have heard.
- The campaign is not spying or eavesdropping – it's about listening more attentively to what people are talking about with obvious feeling. Names are not recorded – what is noted is the issue and the emotion attached, for example, anger about traffic close to the school, feelings of hopelessness about drug use in the area, concern that the police are too intrusive/not around when you need them, a show of interest in what will become of the corner shop that has closed down, and so on.
- When the listeners meet up for the first of their weekly meetings, it will be important to discuss questions of confidentiality thoroughly; provide some practice in listening skills and help them to distinguish the main issues which local people have strong feelings about. They must learn to put their own opinions to one side for the time being and concentrate on what they are hearing.
- As the weekly meetings continue, the group works together to keep a joint record of what they are hearing, gradually focussing their attention on what seem to be emerging as the key issues.

- Another public meeting is called to report back on what has been discovered. The findings can also be written up and publicised through local networks and the local press, presented as evidence to relevant organisations and, most importantly, used as the basis for developing relevant forms of community action and community education in response.
- The next stage is to assemble new and different groups of people to plan and carry out the recommended action.

Citizens' councils, participatory research and participatory appraisals provide similar ways of engaging with local people to identify issues and come up with responses and possible solutions. These are all methods which, like listening campaigns, originate from development education in the South and do not rely on sophisticated reading and writing skills. Photographs, tape recordings, video, drawings and diagrams, role-play and drama can all be used to communicate the findings. A lot of discussion is involved and in the later stages common sense and rational decisions have to be made about what responses are required. A lot of learning goes on without people realising it...

NICK HAYES



The Islington Citizens Conference

The Islington Citizens Conference developed from a passionately-held belief that community-led approaches to planning, policy development and implementation are more likely to be intelligent, widely-owned and sustainable when they involve the community in a serious way.

The local authority wanted to know how the barriers to local people's participation in adult learning could be overcome and what should go into the Adult Learning Plan. They brought together 150 local people from socio-economic groups C2 to D/E as experts and witnesses in the belief that those closest to the issues are best qualified to propose solutions. Knowing that their views would be listened to and acted upon made a real difference to people's willingness to get involved. In recognition of their expertise, conference participants were paid £50 each for their research contribution. There was no top table. Local politicians and officers attended the final plenary session to receive the conference recommendations and solutions. The conference video captures the immense spirit and passion people brought to the event and the way they supported each other to speak. Ninety per cent said they would recommend taking part in a Citizens Conference to someone else.

Islington is now implementing the recommendations of the conference through its Adult Learning Plan and building on the advice they received about the need for supporting new and potential learners. Design groups with a delegated budget, and drawn from people from similar backgrounds to those who attended the conference, are being asked what would be required for people like them to become mentors, what systems would have a chance of working and how should they be implemented.

(Information supplied by Chris Jude)

10 Strength in numbers

'Partnerships work best when they are rooted in a community (not necessarily geographical), have a broad (as distinct from narrow) understanding of adult learning, take the time to understand their own rationale...and embody urgency – here are our needs, our problems to be solved.'

(Judith Summers, Community Strategy Co-ordinator, Cheshire Learning Partnership)

It seems pretty obvious that if you want bring about change, it is better to work in partnership with other people than in isolation. This goes for local residents as well as local service providers and statutory bodies. But the Government's national strategy for neighbourhood renewal recognises that two of the biggest problems in the past have been the failure of different organisations in different sectors to talk to each other, and the self-interest created by 'market competition' within the same sector for resources and 'customers'. The Government is now advocating joined-up thinking and joined-up delivery, with partnership as the defining strategy.

RICHARD OLIVIER

Deals and dilemmas

Working in partnership with local people is undoubtedly the biggest challenge to all concerned – because of lack of trust on both sides and considerable inequalities of power. But giving a voice to local experience and expertise, supporting bottom-up approaches, empowering communities and working for sustainable change must involve shifting the balance of power. In terms of community education, putting dialogue, negotiation and participatory practice at the heart of learning must become intrinsic to the culture.

Collaboration between the voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector also makes sense but this is easier said than done. A common complaint from the voluntary sector is that bigger, more powerful institutions tend to ignore or ride rough-shod over smaller partners. There is also a good deal of pragmatism involved in stitching together paper partnerships to fulfil funding criteria, rather than any principled commitment to collaboration. And although we have a different government to the one which turned public services into a market place, a competitive climate based on organisational rivalries and institutional self-interest is still alive and well.

Partnership working

If you are involved in building up working partnerships:

- decide which agencies/organisations are relevant.
- make contact with people in them who you know have similar interests and shared enthusiasms.
- get together to share information about your work and to identify areas of overlap and opportunities for joint working.
- collaborate on funding applications.
- if you are successful, build in regular meetings to update each other continually and check out how the work is going.
- use networking and informal contact as an alternative to 'too many' meetings – the quick phone call, cup of coffee, chat at the school gate – all help to keep partners in touch.
- be alert to issues of power, equality and inclusiveness, who speaks/who doesn't, watch out for the dead hand of bureaucracy.
- build on your success and strengthen your connections.

The Community University of the Valleys

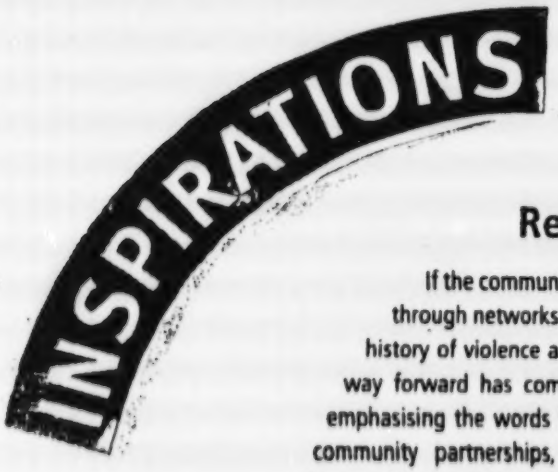
The Community University of the Valleys grew out of community-based access provision and many years of collaboration with local groups such as the Dove workshop, Amman Valley Enterprise and Onllwyn Community Council. It is a response to rapid social and economic change locally and is part of the attempt to influence future change. It creates opportunities for community-based study for a part-time degree of the University of Wales and the partnership now includes the Open University and the University of Glamorgan with growing involvement of Further Education colleges and local authorities.

New Deal for Communities

I have visited eight separate New Deal for Community programmes from Bristol to Middlesbrough and back down to Brighton. What I found was surprising and encouraging. The kind of cynicism and suspicion I had become accustomed to in previous regeneration schemes was fast-disappearing in the NDC neighbourhoods. The residents' central role – in many cases as majority board members – was breeding a new kind of responsibility. Many had become inspired by their real influence over decisions and budgets.

At their best, New Deal for Communities partnerships work because they get the various existing agencies to work better together, understanding each other's problems and how their work can have knock-on effects on others. Inter-departmental barriers begin to crumble. When New Deal for Community resources come to an end (after 10 years) several long-term benefits should be left behind: successful partnership structures; confident resident representatives, improved resident-focussed service delivery and greater inter-agency respect and understanding.

(Tim Dwelly, evaluator)



Rosemount Resource Centre, Derry

If the community sector is to make itself heard it is necessary to work through networks of different groups united in common purpose. Given the history of violence and mistrust here in Northern Ireland, this is a big task. Our way forward has come through putting the political language on one side and emphasising the words that people can relate to, like job creation, cross-border/cross-community partnerships, joined-up thinking, sustainability, employability and others. Community groups recognise that they need all of these if they are to survive and prosper.

We now have a network of 17 community organisations on board, from Derry, Belfast, the Six Counties and the border areas, including all shades of political opinion. We are making sure that each organisation has the same resources in terms of IT hardware, skills and training programmes, but also retains its independence.

Already some groups are developing joint work. The combined collaboration of the network is formidable when it comes to accessing resources and marketing our services. Now we can call on support from all political parties and both parts of Ireland. The IT infrastructure provides training, creates jobs and is allowing us to develop an infrastructure to deliver education to every area. Most important, the united voice of the network is having an increasing influence in relation to the policy makers.

(Tommy McCourt, network member)

Groundwork

Groundwork – the environmental regeneration charity – has been 'joining up' local solutions for a long time and is demonstrating this daily across the country. Its approach is based on patient and undemonstrative building-up of trust, contacts and projects within communities, often working with groups and neighbourhoods with whom councils and other agencies have lost all trust and much effective contact. It is also based on the facilitation of work by local groups and on assisting local mutual associations – such as tenants' groups – to develop skills, exploit their local know-how, win funding and develop new enterprises – for example in horticulture, energy-saving, waste recycling and local food production. The scope for mutual enterprises in new markets for sustainable environmental services is huge, and these represent a major element in the future of all the UK's local economies.

The Star Project

The Steel Areas Regeneration (STAR) project is a recent initiative, developed by Northern College of Residential Adult Education in collaboration with local groups, to support social and economic regeneration in Yorkshire and Humberside. The project was funded jointly by four different local authorities, three different Training and Enterprise Councils, Corus (formerly British Steel), the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the European Regional Development Fund, Northern College and Sheffield Hallam University. The project used a bottom-up approach to the regeneration of steel areas and was built around the full participation of local people in communities affected by the decline of the steel industry. The project forms part of Northern College's on-going commitment to working with adults without formal qualifications, especially working class residents in and around the area where the college is based.

11 Making a difference – how do you know?

If people smile at you in the street and stop for a chat; if they can look you in the eye and tell you what they really think; if they turn up for the activities you arrange and bring along their friends and neighbours; if they can step into the breach when you are called away unexpectedly and do the activity anyway – you know you are getting somewhere.

If the partners you work with and those who employ you are enthusiastic about the work you are doing, are happy to trust your judgement and provide adequate support for your work – you could well be helping to defeat the cynicism of partnership-it is and change the culture of institutions.

Both kinds of response are necessary. But it's no good becoming a local heroine or hero so far as the community is concerned, if you are not so effective when it comes to being an influence for change at a structural level. Neither is it enough to make the right noises so far as meetings with fellow professionals are

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concerned if you have no credibility among local people or sense of solidarity with their struggles.

Either way it is useful to have some evidence about the impact your work is having on participants, partners, providers and the wider community. It will come in useful when you are making the case for more understanding, more time or more resources.

Institutions like evaluation exercises to check for quality in provision. What goes on in community-based learning should also strive to meet the highest standards in terms of what participants can expect from what you have to offer. But filling in forms and ticking boxes are probably not the most revealing or accurate ways of measuring your impact. Try to build up a fuller picture by gathering several kinds of evidence.

Written and spoken evidence

- check out with participants in activities or on courses how they are feeling and what they are learning at regular intervals throughout the life of the activity – keep a detailed record or recording of what they say.
- ask them to write a few things down (anonymously if necessary) which they think you ought to know – including suggestions for changes or improvements.
- encourage participants to do the talking when it comes to making presentations or attending meetings with officials and funders so that a real sense of joint endeavour is obvious.
- include the words and voices of participants in all communications with the press and in all reports to funders or other agencies.
- ask partners and providers to give you written feed-back from time to time, detailing their perceptions of any strengths and weaknesses.

Visual evidence

- keep a photographic record of activities and achievements. Photos are good because they can show people relating to each other and engaged in activities, as well as providing a record of events and special occasions. Make sure the photos are on display to reinforce group solidarity and a sense of belonging.
- the use of camcorders and video equipment to record activities not only helps to develop technical and creative skills – the results can be useful for campaigning and public meetings.
- training for transformation workshops (see p41) often ask people to paint their feelings on large sheets of paper at various stages of the activity – this can be fun and is a way of getting people talking.

Individual and social impact

- gather evidence to show the impact of your work on the quality of life of individuals and of what is being achieved more generally in the community.
- include personal testimonies about greater confidence and self-esteem, evidence of learning new skills, making a contribution to sustaining a support group, or involving others in community activities.
- include evidence of solutions being found to locally-defined issues or the development of sustainable activities that did not previously exist.

Speaking from experience

'My political and social consciousness has been raised by becoming more aware of the fact that more needs to be done. My general knowledge has been increased and I have learned a lot along the way. It has made me look forward to learning more. My skills have developed – especially being able to handle awkward problems in my workplace and helping to solve them.'

'When I was isolated and unsure about what was going on I was in a state of darkness. I had much to fear about what would happen to me. As my studying went along, it became clearer to me that what had happened to me in my life was not 'all my own fault'. I met others who had experienced similar things in different ways. It was not only me. It made it possible for me to stand up and be counted. Now I am very calm and not intimidated anymore.'

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'New knowledge has been the means of building the self-esteem I never had before.'

'I have learned that I have more ability than I ever gave myself credit for. I have learned to look at things from different angles. I find that a lot of what I'm learning about I already knew about from my own experience but the education helps me to make better sense of it all and want to work with others like myself to change things.'

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12 Building-in sustainability

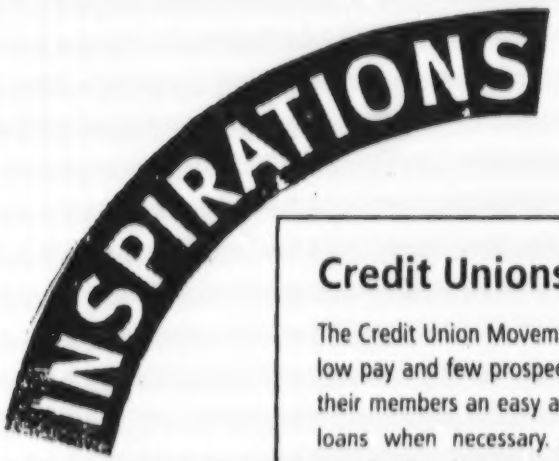
The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal has a 20-year timescale: not very long to turn around neighbourhoods that have witnessed generations of poverty and neglect, you might think, but certainly a recognition that the short-term policy fluctuations of recent years have contributed to the sense of hopelessness, uncertainty and cynicism in deprived communities. Although the Government now seems ready to make longer-term commitments, hand-to-mouth funding and a project-based approach to resources are still the everyday reality of community education and development work at local level. In this context, it is important to build-in sustainability as much as possible.

A short course on garden design might be helpful to support the reclamation of some derelict land and the development of a community allotments scheme. But as the project develops, some input about organic gardening or vegetable growing will become more relevant. With energy and enthusiasm in the medium term the scheme will develop a life of its own. There is a huge amount to be learned 'by doing' when it comes to allotments and enormous opportunities for people of all ages to learn from each other. Negotiating a lease from the local council, dividing up the plots and renting them out, inviting the local primary school or Asian women's group to take over a plot, forming a co-operative to buy seeds cheaply and to supply allotment holders with basic tools and fertilisers – all require group work and social skills and an element of administration. Supplying local people with cheap vegetables in season provides an attractive local service as well as supporting the idea of healthy exercise and healthy eating. In the long term the scheme will be sustained by new members joining the co-operative and old members showing them the ropes.

It is worth distinguishing between the short-term, medium-term and long-term nature of the work you are involved in.

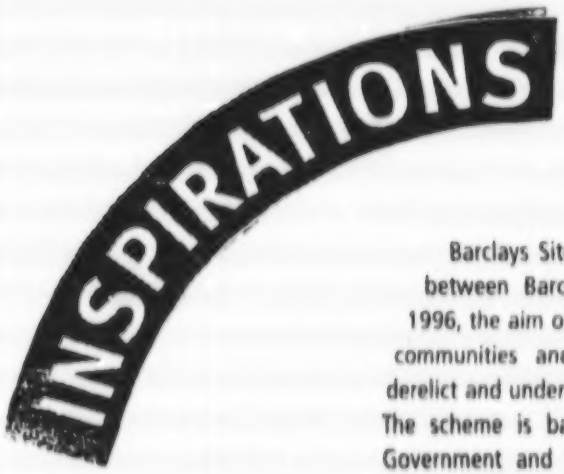
In general the sustainability of projects depends on four ingredients which need to be built in from the outset:

- **resources**: funding is critical to get things going – in the long run it is better to seek funding from a variety of sources and link it to local issues and concerns, than 'dream up' projects to fit in with funding criteria.
- **knowledge**: this is the fertiliser that enables things to grow. Build in opportunities for participants to acquire new and relevant knowledge to meet the aspirations of those involved.
- **skills**: these recognise and make the most of the skills people already have – create as many opportunities as possible to teach new skills and hand over the responsibilities that go with applying them.
- **commitment**: this is connected to raising awareness, engaging with issues and feeling concerned enough and enthusiastic enough to get involved. But people's lives are often difficult – build in plenty of support so that no one feels excluded



Credit Unions

The Credit Union Movement is a response to problems of debt exacerbated by low pay and few prospects. Credit unions are financial co-operatives offering their members an easy and convenient place to save with access to low-cost loans when necessary. They encourage their members to make regular contributions into savings accounts which create a central pool of funds. The interest paid on any loans is used to cover administrative costs, with any surplus returned to the members as dividends. The common bond between the local membership of credit unions establishes a degree of responsibility and mutual accountability which minimises the risk of defaulting on loans. Because credit unions are co-operatives, they are democratically controlled and owned by the membership with equal voting rights and an elected board of directors. Credit unions have been running in the UK since the 1960s and there are now more than 500 with over 250,000 members.



Barclays SiteSavers

Barclays SiteSavers is a £3.4m, six-year partnership between Barclays PLC and Groundwork. Launched in 1996, the aim of the scheme is to help people build stronger communities and enhance their environment, transforming derelict and under-used land for recreational and community use. The scheme is backed by the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, managed by Groundwork, with support from British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Wildlife Trusts.

Hundreds of sites across the country have already been redeveloped each year, using the sponsorship money, and the scheme has so far involved around 50,000 adults and young people.

Sustainable regeneration

New Cross and Deptford have been on the receiving end of nearly every government urban regeneration scheme since the early 1980s. Grants have been made available for housing, open space, the environment – not that the casual visitor would notice. The area's problems are so deep-rooted, apparently, that money has little impact. But the community spirit refuses to die. This is a part of south London where generations and races mix to create a rich diversity. A NIACE-funded local history project is helping to strengthen people's sense of identity and to create a focus for local democracy – sparking active involvement in future regeneration initiatives. Local history volunteers are an integral part of raising people's awareness of their community and its needs. Twenty-five volunteers have been trained in community research methods. They publish a newsletter and hold events in schools, libraries and community centres to get people sharing ideas. Concentrating on four of the most deprived neighbourhoods around New Cross Gate, the project has been able to build up information and is building a framework for community involvement. This kind of approach to building sustainable regeneration is precisely what has been missing from top-down schemes in the past.

13 Spreading the word

Letting people know about the neighbourhood work you are doing is important for three main reasons:

- it helps to spread the word locally and can lead to more and different people wanting to get involved.
- it communicates a sense of energy and action – the feeling that something good is happening – which is important in building a culture of activism and participation.
- it works to keep different organisations and funders on board and helps to commit them to acting responsibly when they are deploying their resources.

One of the best ways of protecting important work at neighbourhood level is to make sure that the people with influence and power know about it. Sometimes you will want their endorsement in those arenas where decisions get made. This is also important in case the work triggers controversy. Community activity in a democratic society is not necessarily compliant. Encouraging community-led contributions to neighbourhood renewal may well be a challenge to the kind of local officials and professionals who are not used to consulting residents or having to answer to their criticisms. It will be less easy to dismiss critical or angry exchanges if the groups involved are known to be engaged in the kind of work the neighbourhood renewal strategy was developed to encourage.

Apart from local residents, there are other audiences who should hear about your work:

- cultivate the local press – send them press releases, photographs and 'good news' stories.
- produce briefings and updates for local politicians, key providers and funding bodies.
- make sure the work is known about by the local LSC, learning partnership and LSP.

Make sure that your communications include:

- testimonies and endorsements from those involved.
- photographs showing activity and engagement.
- examples of the impact the work is having.
- evidence of the wider benefits of learning.

Letting go and moving on

The worst thing any community education worker can do to a community is to flit in for a while, "faff about" for a bit and then inflict themselves on someone else. There is a lot of money to be made out of poverty – by institutions, consultants and experts of various kinds – and a lot of jobs to be had in the "regeneration industry" for those who rarely live in the neighbourhoods or estates in which they work. This is not to underestimate the enormous commitment that many of us have to helping make a more equal and socially just society, but it is important to be responsible and ethical about what we do – because the people directly involved do not have a choice about the issues which confront them.

The term 'exit strategy' is often used to identify the procedures which should be put in place by responsible workers for winding up projects, letting go and moving on. It's an unfortunate term with military connotations that sounds more like a retreat after an invasion. Perhaps that is what it feels like to those on the receiving end.

We know that education has the power to change people's lives – but it also has the habit of leaving them high and dry with nowhere else to go. Equally, the parachuting in and out of short-term projects into deprived neighbourhoods can raise expectations that are unfulfilled, leaving people feeling exploited and cynical.

If your project is time-limited and your future uncertain:

- tell people the truth from the beginning about what is available to them.
- if the goalposts get moved part-way through – keep everyone informed.
- make sure that advice and guidance supports are in place which help learners to move on or access other kinds of appropriate provision locally.
- be sure that you have built the four ingredients for sustainability into your work – funding, knowledge, skills and commitment (see page 32).
- if you have been really successful in empowering others – it will be high-time to move on.

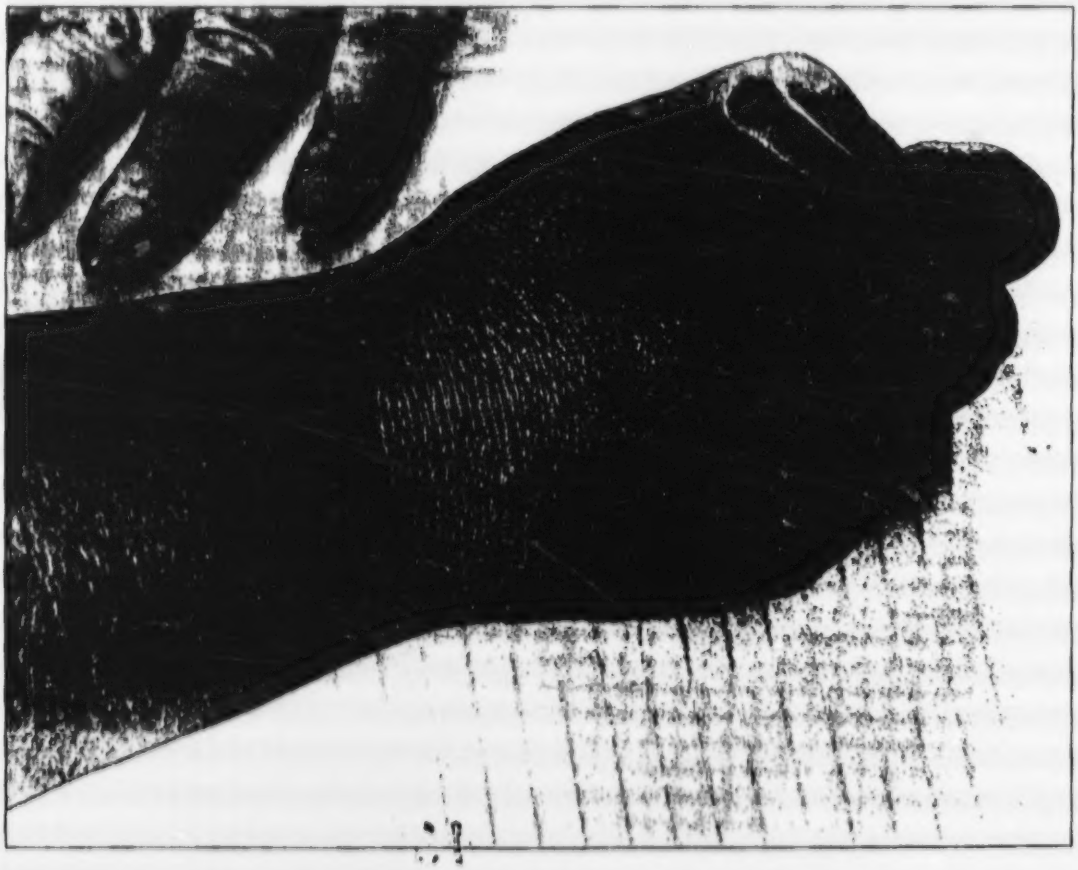
15 Check it out

Good practice

- starts with a listening campaign – or other participatory research and consultation exercise – before devising new initiatives.
- relates to the wider social, cultural and economic context in which participants are situated as well to learners' interests, concerns and aspirations.
- empowers local people to have more influence over how adult learning and other local services are delivered, including opportunities for residents to deliver their own projects.
- uses teaching methods that are participatory, interactive, practical, creative, and which involve problem-solving and critical thinking.
- requires teachers who understand the issues at stake; have the personal skills to establish equal and respectful relationships with learners; are sensitive to gender and cultural difference and social inclusion; and who can teach in a knowledgeable and practical but informal way.
- promotes equality of opportunity and takes a stand against discrimination, racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice and bigotry.
- values people's experience and expertise and works towards sustainable social change.
- encourages constructive partnerships between local people and with all interested agencies to support, build and plan collaborative activities.
- includes and is based on sensitive, patient and negotiated outreach activities.
- uses community-based, accessible venues where participants feel comfortable and which are attractive, welcoming and safe; available at suitable times; and sufficiently well-resourced, including ICT.
- concentrates on removing barriers associated with fees, childcare, personal support (physical difficulties and disabilities), learning support (language, mentoring and basic skills) and travel costs.
- encourages regular and inclusive evaluation that draws upon the opinions of participants, partners, providers and the wider community.
- offers information, advice and guidance through accessible and local sources.

Issues/challenges

- According to researchers at Hull University, 'the Government's mission to breathe new life into towns and cities is dominated by men, with women under-represented at all levels of the process...this affects the way projects are being implemented on the ground.'
- Professionals must trust people more. Although local people may not be formally 'educated' they know a lot about the issues that affect their lives and their communities. They have the capacity to engage critically, to understand and to make complex commonsense judgements and rational decisions that should not be underestimated.
- Hand-to-mouth funding and a project-based approach to resources are still the everyday reality of community education and development work at local level.
- Public consultation is too often top-down and tokenistic – people are given restricted options. Consultation methods should allow ideas and proposals to emerge from below.
- Filling in forms and ticking boxes are probably not the most revealing or accurate ways of measuring impact.



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- People in deprived communities often live complicated and difficult lives that can cause problems when it comes to regular participation. Strategies should be put in place to support people in difficult situations so that they are not excluded.
- Quite often community action comes from impatience with, or opposition to, official policies, in ways that challenge the actions of local authorities. Community education workers, working alongside local people, could find themselves caught in the middle, with some difficult ethical decisions to make.
- Engagement must be seen as real – raising people's expectations of change and subsequently not delivering will discourage future participation.
- Putting dialogue, negotiation and participatory practice at the heart of learning must become intrinsic to the culture of community education.

Trouble-shooting

- Outreach workers need training to understand the political, economic and sociological context in which they are working and to develop skills involving anti-discriminatory practice, conflict resolution and effective communication.
- It is important to let people know what is going on. Successes should be celebrated and problems shared. Strategies for 'getting around' or 'moving on' from failures need to be embraced.
- Good public relations and plenty of positive evidence about the impact of the work are good investments in times of controversy or funding cuts.

Glossary

Active citizenship encourages people to think of themselves as citizens and to get involved personally, practically and politically in articulating and pursuing their concerns

Anti-discriminatory practice means working with individuals and groups in ways that celebrate diversity but take a stand against oppression, discrimination and prejudice

Capacity-building means strengthening relatively inexperienced individuals – and in some cases groups, organisations and networks – to increase their ability to contribute to specific activities or action

Conflict resolution recognises that conflict between different groups is serious and damaging to all concerned – it uses skills of negotiation, awareness-raising and bridge-building to attempt peace and reconciliation

Critical thinking encourages a questioning approach to learning, including information handling and the ability to make reasoned arguments supported by evidence

Democratic renewal seeks to make democratic activity a way of life rather than simply a voting procedure – it involves re-engaging those who feel alienated (for whatever reason), powerless, or cynical about their ability to make a difference and seeks to build democratic values into the working arrangements of all groups and organisations

Democratic participation means taking part in democratic activities such as voting, lobbying, attending meetings, joining political parties and/or pressure groups

Exit strategy is a term used to identify the arrangements put in place for winding up, letting go, or moving on from projects in ways that don't leave participants feeling high and dry

Institutional racism refers to the fact that institutions and organisations – which

have been created by predominantly white people, in which white people hold most of the positions of authority and/or influence and in which the prevailing value system and day-to-day assumptions of those involved reflects the experience of being white – have a tendency to be either insensitive, prejudiced or actively hostile to non-white people in both conscious and unconscious ways

Participatory democracy reflects the concern that people become actively involved in making democratic values and democratic ways of working a reality in all forms of organisation, including political organisations

Social exclusion is the term used to describe how some forms of disadvantage, including poverty, unemployment, poor skills, and educational under-achievement interact to marginalise people from mainstream society. Social exclusion is about more than multiple disadvantages, however. It is about the effects that social inequalities and divisions, poverty, lack of power and lack of knowledge have on people's ability to participate, or to be taken seriously by others, in society

Sustainability is about equipping people, projects, organisations and communities with the necessary resources, knowledge, commitment, and skills in ways that contribute to preserving initiatives and enhancing developments so that they can be continued into the future

NICK HAYES

Further reading and resources

Reading

A new commitment to neighbourhood renewal: National strategy action plan (2001) SEU

Bringing Britain back together: A national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (1998) SEU

Informal learning in the community: A trigger for change and development (1999) Veronica McGivney, NIACE

Reclaiming common purpose (2000) (ed) Jane Thompson, Mae Shaw and Liam Bane, NIACE

Recovering outreach: Concepts, issues and practices (2000) Veronica McGivney, NIACE

Rerooting lifelong learning, resourcing neighbourhood renewal (2001) Jane Thompson, NIACE

Working with excluded groups: Guidelines on good practice (2000) Veronica McGivney, NIACE

Women, class and education (2000) Jane Thompson, Routledge

Young, urban and female (2001) Rachel Alsop, Suzanne Clisby and Gary Craig, YWCA

Resources

Changing directions: A critical look at the future of work and unemployment (2000) Katherine Hughes *et al*, NIACE

Colour blind: A practical guide to teaching black adult learners (2001) Alyson Malach, NIACE

Making a difference: A resource pack for people who want to become more active citizens (1999) Stella Dadzie, NIACE

Our right to learn: A pack for people with learning difficulties in continuing education (2000) (ed) Yola Jacobsen, NIACE

Partners companion to training for transformation (2001) Maureen Sheehy, Partners

Useful contacts and networks

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
Elliot House
10-12 Arlington Street
London SW1E 5EH
tel 020 7828 7022

Community Development Foundation (CDF)
60 Highbury Grove
London N4 2AG
tel 020 7226 5375
www.cdf.org.uk

Disability Awareness in Action
11 Belgrave Road
London SW1V 1RB
tel 020 7834 0477

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Manchester M4 3EQ
Tel 0161 833 9244
email info@eoc.org.uk

Groundwork UK
85-87 Cornwall Street
Birmingham B3 3 BY
tel 0121 236 8565
www.groundwork.org.uk
(environmental regeneration charity)

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL
tel 020 7713 6161

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
tel 020 7944 8383 email
neighbourhoodrenewal@dtlr.gsi.gov.uk

New Deal for Communities
(Patricia Davies NDC Support and Advice)
tel 020 7944 4878
email patricia_davies@dtlr.gsi.gov.uk

NIACE
21 De Montfort Street
Leicester LE1 7GE
tel 0116 204 4200
www.niace.org.uk

Social Exclusion Unit SEU
Cabinet Office
35 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BQ
tel 020 7276 2055

Partners, Training for Transformation
24 Northbrook Road
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Lifelines 1

Community education and neighbourhood renewal

Jane Thompson

We've all heard about the current government strategies for neighbourhood renewal, but what do they mean? How will they impact on community education? And what does community education have to offer learners in deprived communities and run-down neighbourhoods?

This guide cuts to the heart of what community education and neighbourhood renewal are all about. It points out the opportunities, challenges and dilemmas that are raised by government policy, and offers practical advice to allow for sustainable initiatives, active citizenship and social change.

Based on over 25 years' experience of working in community education in poor neighbourhoods, Jane Thompson offers insight, advice, examples and resources aimed at community education practitioners who want to make a difference.

This is an essential guide for anyone involved in neighbourhood renewal strategies and interested in the part that community education has to play.

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The *NIACE lifelines in adult learning* series provides straightforward background and information, accessible know-how and useful examples of good practice for all practitioners involved in adult and community learning. Focusing in turn on different areas of adult learning these guides are an essential part of every practitioner's toolkit.

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